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DAVITT, MICHAEL

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THE IRISH CAUSE.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BY

MICHAEL DAVITT

IN THE

ADELAIDE STREET RINK,

ON

SATURDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 20th, 1886.

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MICHAEL DAVITT,
FOUNDER OF THE LAND LEAGUE.

THE IRISH CAUSE.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BY

MICHAEL DAVITT.

Nearly 4,000 people assembled at the Adelaide street Rink Saturday night to listen to the lecture delivered by Mr. Michael Davitt, the founder of the Irish National League, and the great audience showed itself unanimously in sympathy with the object aimed at by the League—Home Rule for Ireland. The enthusiasm was immense, especially on particular occasions, such as when Mr. Davitt entered the room, and again when Mr. J. A. Mulligan, the President of the local branch of the Irish National League, in his opening remarks referred to the nine years that Mr. Davitt had spent in penal servitude for the cause of his country. The cheering was most enthusiastic at this point, and long continued. The immense meeting was presided over by Mr. Mulligan and with him on the platform sat the orator of the evening, and many of the gentlemen who had called upon Mr. Davitt and Mr. McCarthy during the afternoon. Among those present were Messrs. J. Conmee, ex-M. P. P., Ald. John Woods, Hugh McMahon, Charles Burns, J. P., D. J. O'Donoghue, Hon. John O'Donohoe, Alfred Jury, N. G. Bigelow, Ald. Defoe, Phillips Thompson, C. Doherty, P. Curran, T. W. Anglin, together with many of the Roman Catholic clergy of the city; while in the audience sat Messrs. P. Hughes, B. B. Hughes, H. Nolan, John A. Proctor, Ald. M. J. Woods, and many other prominent citizens.

Before introducing the lecturer the chairman called on Mr. D. A. Cahill, the secretary of the local League branch, to read letters of apology received from gentlemen unable to attend the gathering. The letters were from Mr. J. O'Sullivan, of Peterborough, Rev. Dr. Burns, of Hamilton, and many others.

THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

Mr. J. A. Mulligan, President of the Local Union, Chairman of the meeting, in introducing Mr. Davitt, spoke as follows:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—On behalf of the Toronto Branch of the Irish National League, I thank you for the magnificent attendance that to-night greets the father of our society upon his first public appearance in this Dominion. (Cheers.) It is a most pleasing and convincing proof of the popularity in this city of our distinguished guest, and of the noble cause which he represents and will advocate to-night. It is barely ten weeks since two delegates from the Loyal and Patriotic and Anti-Repeal Union of Ireland visited our city. They are welcome to boast of their opposition to Home Rule. But if the representatives of that union who declared that they would take up arms against constituted authority if Home Rule were given to Ireland, and "would shed," to quote their own words, "their last drop of blood to prevent the fulfilment of the law," although we know "the first who would run at the sound of a gun would be the Billy of Ballykilbeg" (cheers)—if these men are entitled to the name of "Loyal and Patriotic," then the crime of treason and sedition should be effaced from the statute books at once. (Cheers.) They endeavored to convince Canadians, who enjoy and appreciate Home Rule, who prized it as their greatest blessing, and who would not relinquish it without a struggle that would be worthy of the Canadians of 1837, that Ireland does not need and has not a right to Home Rule. But, with the exception of a few selfish and strangely inconsistent people who could be found in this, as in every community, who would not accord to others the rights which they themselves enjoy, and who can always be found at a free show, although their peculiar patriotism will never

pay a cent, Canada, as the ignominious failure of the tour of these delegates proved to them, and as this magnificent demonstration to Mr. Davitt proves, is solid for Home Rule. (Loud cheers.) Canadian sentiment has been well expressed by a prominent Protestant clergyman of this city who has written: "I would not deprive any Christian people under Heaven of the rights which we ourselves possess." (Cheers.) He is not the only Protestant clergyman in this city that is with us in this cause. Since we began our preparations for this lecture we have received from these gentlemen many letters expressing sympathy with our cause and assurances of their good wishes for its success. And, to-night, in the town of Aylmer, that most fearless, patriotic and powerful advocate of our rights, the Rev. Dr. Burns of Hamilton, the Principal of a Wesleyan College, is speaking the kind word on our behalf.

I would not, ladies and gentlemen, have referred to the delegates from the Loyal and Patriotic Union were it not for the unmanly and unchristian attack made upon Mr. Davitt when they were here. (Hisses.) Never have I witnessed in a public man such an exhibition of venom and bitterness against an honorable opponent, and I trust I shall never again behold so sorry a spectacle as when the Rev. Dr. Kane pronounced the name of Mr. Michael Davitt with such a sneer and with such a distorted pronunciation as to cause the laughter of the thoughtless and the disgust of his refined hearers. (Hear, hear.) And never did I hear so heartless and atrocious an utterance as when he was called a "beggar and impostor," who spent nine years of his life in penal servitude for the cause of his country—(loud and prolonged cheering)—who gave, as he gives to-night, his best energies to relieve the distress of his unfortunate country, who is ever seeking to advance and improve their moral and social condition, who is "ever prompting, ever seeking, some improvement yet to plan to uplift his fellow-beings, and like man feels for man." (Cheers.) I am sure that Mr. Davitt has had many bitter and sad experiences of prison life, but I am also sure he would go back to his prison rather than betray his country and exchange positions with his slanderers. Finally, ladies and gentlemen, I trust, on your behalf, that health and long life will be given to Mr. Davitt to continue his noble work—(cheers)—for his struggle in Ireland is watched by the whole world, and every step that is being made in Ireland in behalf of freedom is a step being made in the same direction throughout the world. For—

"When a deed is done for freedom,
Through the broad world's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic,
Trembling on from East to West,
And the slave, where'er he cowers,
Feels the soul within him climb
To the awful verge of manhood.
As the energies sublime
Of centuries burst full-blossomed
On the thorny stems of time."

Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud of this moment, proud to be able to present to you the patriotic, unselfish, self-sacrificing, noble Michael Davitt.

MICHAEL DAVITT.

Mr. Davitt then stepped to the front, and again there was a grand outburst of applause. As soon as this had subsided the great Irishman proceeded thus, speaking deliberately, clearly, and in measured terms:—Ladies and gentlemen—Judging from the hearty greeting you have given me here to-night and from the general kindness that has been extended to me since I arrived in your city, I do not think it will be necessary for me to apologize for coming here to say something on the Irish cause. (Applause.) But, indeed, I am not astonished at the

HEARTINESS OF THE RECEPTION

you have extended me, because I know whenever any representative of Ireland has been in your midst you have given him the same generous welcome that you have given me. Now, before addressing you upon the subject of my lecture this evening, perhaps I may be permitted to trespass for a few minutes upon your time in referring to some statements made here a short time ago by the two gentlemen to whom our chairman has alluded. I will not imitate their example—(applause)—by casting any aspersions upon their motives or calling into question for one moment the honesty of their purpose. This world would indeed be a sad place to live in if we were compelled to

look upon all our opponents as men actuated by base and unworthy motives. I will therefore try to extend to the

REV. DR. KANE

that courtesy and charity which ministers of religion ought to teach but unfortunately do not always practice. While liberally bespattering myself and colleagues with every species of abuse and misrepresentation, this rev. gentleman and his colleague took good care to give themselves the best possible character before the citizens of Toronto. Dr. Kane, in his opening remarks, said, "In illustration of what I have been saying, I may simply tell you that my friend who accompanies me is a barrister, in the enjoyment of a large and increasing practice. As for myself, I am a clergyman with very onerous and engrossing duties, and I could only have the privilege of being with you to-night, because I was willing to utilize what my Belfast friends would call my well-earned holiday." Dr. Kane did not add that this "well-earned holiday" had an ugly coincidence in time with the sitting of the Royal Commission in Belfast for the purpose of investigating the origin of

THE DISGRACEFUL RIOTS

which have scandalized the whole civilized world. (Loud applause.) Allow me for a few moments to refer to the responsibility for these deplorable occurrences. The evidence taken before this Royal Commission—which was appointed not by the National League, but by the Tory Government of England—conclusively proves that Dr. Kane and his anti-Home Rule friends were the prime movers in the unfortunate business, and that they are therefore morally responsible for all the bloodshed that has taken place. (Applause.) Inspector Reid, himself a staunch Protestant, has testified as follows on this point. Of the Loyalists he says:—"There was a regular set made by the Protestant party to drive the police bag and baggage out of Belfast, and they wanted to do it in detail—the first time in the Shankhill Road, and having succeeded there they attempted it in other places." Of the Nationalists, this unprejudiced Protestant says:—"I may mention that as far as I observed, the Catholic Bishop and clergymen did all in their power to preserve the peace. The Catholic clergy rendered able assistance in preserving the peace at the Albert street church. I saw them beat away the children and look after the people generally. They gave very valuable assistance indeed." In addition to this declaration, let me add the comments of an English Protestant newspaper of great influence and wide circulation. The *Leeds Mercury*, writing upon the evidence given before this commission in Belfast, used the following words:—"It is now clearly established that the riots began in an attack upon Catholic workmen by Orangemen, and that throughout it was on the side of the Orange party that the most gross disregard both for the law and for the sanctity of human life was shown. The feeling against the constabulary was deliberately fomented, we regret to say, by Protestant clergymen, some of whom used their pulpits for the purpose of inflaming the minds of their congregations, and of inciting them to deeds of lawless violence. When the notorious Dr. Hanna took it upon himself to describe the action of the police in defence of their own lives as equalling in atrocity the infamies of a Claverhouse, and when he described ruffians who had been shot down whilst engaged in brutal rioting in the streets of Belfast as martyrs in a conflict with a perfidious government, he was probably laboring under a degree of excitement which hardly made him responsible for his own words or actions. But, whether responsible or not, this Dr. Hanna and other men hardly less guilty—some of them, interjected Mr. Davitt, at that time were in Canada on a well-earned holiday—(laughter)—took upon themselves a terrible responsibility, the full consequences of which they undoubtedly should be made to bear. This commission has already done much to strip the disguise off the hideous imposture of Orange loyalty, and to show it to us in its true light as a determination to maintain a relentless and cruel supremacy over the Catholic majority." But let us leave Dr. Kane and his action some time ago in Belfast, continued Mr. Davitt, and return to his appearance in this city. He was careful again to impress upon the people of Toronto how good were the reputations possessed by himself and Mr. Smith. "We were under the necessity," he said, "of earning our own livelihood in an honest way," the inference being of course that all those who differed on the Irish question from Dr. Kane were impostors, and were living upon the

people of Ireland and upon the Irish race everywhere. He continued: "Why should we connive at the rule of this British monarch being superseded by a triumvirate composed of a person of Mr. Parnell's reputation, of Mr. Michael Davitt's, an ex-convict, and Mr. Patrick Egan, an absconding treasurer? Why should we connive at the authority of the Queen being superseded by a college of professional agitators?" I am sure I need not attempt to defend Mr. Parnell's reputation before an audience like this. (Roars of applause.) The distinguished Irish leader has appeared before the citizens of Toronto before to-day, and long after the miserable misrepresentations of his fanatical opponents, and their names are forgotten, the name of Mr. Parnell and his efforts in the cause of Irish freedom will live enshrined on the pages of history. (Renewed applause.) The whole world outside of the Orangemen of Belfast has recognized before to-day that Mr. Parnell is a gentleman, a statesman, and a patriot, whose efforts on behalf of his country are now being recognized throughout the whole world, and inspire the respect of right-minded men everywhere. As for Mr. Patrick Egan, once treasurer of the Land League, no fouler slander could be uttered than to say that he was an absconding treasurer. Before he left Ireland his accounts as treasurer of the National Land League were audited by men in whom the Irish people have implicit confidence—John Dillon (applause), Rev. Father Sheehy, and Mr. Matthew Harris—and their audit of the report was read before a convention in Dublin, and published in all the Irish and English papers on the following morning. I know no man connected with this Irish Home Rule movement of ours who has made greater or more generous sacrifices for Ireland than Mr. Patrick Egan. While in Dublin he was known and respected by those who jostled with him in politics, as a fearless, upright and honest man; and he is living to-day in the city of Lincoln, Neb., respected by all the people of that locality, as a man deserving of the good-will of all men who appreciate industry, and ability, and enterprise. Now, with reference to the sneer cast at the humble individual before you. It is quite true I have been a convict in England's prisons (applause), but I think the disgrace for that attaches more to England than to myself.

A slight pause occurred here, during which a lady presented Mr. Davitt with a handsome bouquet. Continuing, Mr. Davitt said:

It is quite true that for nine years I was compelled to herd with the murderers, and cut-throats, and burglars of England; but notwithstanding that punishment, that hideous suffering, can Dr. Kane or any of my enemies accuse me of having given utterance to a word of vengeance or resentment against Englishmen on that account. (Applause.) I have never apologized, and I never will, for having endeavored to win by physical force for Ireland that Parliament which is her's by right. And let me add this: Were I to lose faith in the constitutional movement in which I am now engaged, were I to be convinced that moral force action would be of no avail in regaining Ireland's legislative rights, I would again resort to the same methods for which I was imprisoned; and if I were called upon I would undergo the same penalty for the same offence. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) But let me add: How many years did Dr. Kane and Mr. Smith spend in prison to prove their sincerity or their devotion to the cause which they came here to represent? (Laughter.) I have yet to learn that a man sacrifices the good esteem of mankind because he is made to undergo the rigors of imprisonment on account of a great cause. (Cheers.) Where has the struggle for liberty ever been vindicated in any civilized country except by sacrifices of this kind? (Cheers.) Why, there is no part of my career of which I am more proud than that portion which comprised my imprisonment in English dungeons for striving to free Ireland. (Cheers and a voice—"God bless you.") Let me refer to one more statement and I will take leave of the two gentlemen who ran away from Belfast on "a well-earned holiday." (Laughter.) I am about to quote from a speech delivered by a Mr. George Hill Smith. I have to confess my lamentable ignorance of this distinguished opponent. I am fairly well acquainted by reputation with all the leaders of the anti-Home Rule movement in Ireland and Great Britain, but I have had to come to Toronto, Canada, to learn that Mr. George Hill Smith is really a man of ability, and an opponent worth considering in the national cause of Ireland. (Laughter.) This gentleman is reported to have said the following words with reference to the Irish leader, Mr. Parnell, and the treatment of his tenantry:—

"The conditions he exacted were that if the rents due in September were not paid by the end of October they would be served with a document called a writ. This cannot be contradicted. I have seen dozens of writs on the Parnell property. I refer to the writs served last October for rents due on the 29th September."

Now, continued Mr. Davitt, there are two sorts of political lying; one is careless and the other is the deliberate system. The careless one is where a man is unwilling to ascertain the truth about his political opponents; and the other kind of lying consists in deliberately framing an untruth and, knowing it to be such, giving utterance to it as if it were the truth. I regret to have to prove Mr. Smith guilty of this species of falsehood if he tries to make the citizens of Toronto believe that Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell, the leader of the Irish people, was guilty of harsh treatment to his tenants, when Mr. Smith knew right well that it was Mr. Parnell, a brother of the Irish leader, a Tory landlord, who had treated his tenantry in this manner. (Cheers.) Now this gross calumny has been proven false hundreds of times, both in Ireland and Great Britain. Mr. Smith knew right well that this was the case, yet he came here to Toronto to again utter a lie which he knew right well that the men of the National League, English Liberals and English writers who had enquired into the facts denounced as a falsehood and a calumny against the leader of the Irish people. Well, their tactics will defeat themselves in the end. (Hear, hear.) They have been resorted to during the last twelve months, especially in the campaign against Mr. Gladstone and the cause of Home Rule in Great Britain. (Cheers.) Their malicious statements have made no enemies of the cause of Ireland either in England, Wales or Scotland, and I am certain that they have made no enemies of Ireland here in Canada either. (Cries of "no, no," and cheers.) The purport of the speeches delivered by these two gentlemen, apart from the misrepresentation of the Irish leaders, was to try to convince the Canadian people that Ulster, Protestant Ulster, was a unit in opposition to the cause of Home Rule. But what are the real facts upon this point? Since my friend, Justin McCarthy—(loud and prolonged cheers)—has been declared the representative of the second Protestant city of Ulster, that province has a majority of its parliamentary representatives, not in favor of continuing Castle rule, but pledged to go to Westminster, there to demand the restoration of an Irish Parliament. (Cheers.) I deny emphatically that Dr. Kane and Mr. Smith represent Irish Protestantism in their fanatical opposition to the cause of Ireland. They may represent the Orange lodges, pledged to resort to civil war to prevent the restoration of an Irish Parliament, but we can proudly claim that we have a Protestant Home Rule Association, pledged to work by peaceful and constitutional means to win back for Ireland her parliament for kindred Catholic and Protestant. (Cheers.) But let me make one further quotation and then I will have done with individuals and newspapers. This time I will take my quotation from the columns of a paper which I assume to be a very able and respectable organ of public sentiment in this city. It is called the *Sentinel*—(laughter and hisses). Under date of the 18th of the present month, Thursday last, I find the following in the editorial columns:

"*Catholic Progress*, a Dublin magazine, published under the patronage of the Irish priests and bishops, has pronounced that the woes of Ireland are attributable to a single cause, the existence in the country of Protestantism, and that until that religion is extirpated there will be neither peace, prosperity nor contentment." (Laughter.)

The editor continues to quote the article in *Catholic Progress* as follows:

"Would that the unappropriated funds were sufficient to buy off all the Protestant landlords, and that every Protestant meeting house were swept from the land. Then would Ireland recover herself. Outrages would then be unknown, for there would be no admixture of misbelievers with her (Rome's) champions."

Well, supposing that there were in Ireland a man, or men, who would give utterance to these abominable sentiments against his Protestant fellow-countrymen, would it be fair to charge the whole Catholic population in Ireland with the moral responsibility for such sentiments? It would be as unjust as if I took the views of the editor of the *Sentinel* as fairly representing the opinions of the people of the whole of Canada. (Hear, hear.) But, ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you that there is not in Dublin or Ireland any

such magazine published as *Catholic Progress*. (Laughter.) I live in dear old dirty Dublin when I am at home. (Cheers.) I am a journalist by profession. I earn my bread and butter by working for Irish, English, American and Australian papers. I am well acquainted with every newspaper in Ireland and Great Britain, and in order to satisfy myself that I was not mistaken I enquired of Justin McCarthy, to-day one of the ablest journalists in England — (cheers) — if he knew of the existence of any such paper as *Catholic Progress*. He declared that he never heard of the magazine before. (Laughter.) I thus pay my respects to the research of the editor of the *Sentinel*, and I now pass to the subject of my address. (Loud cheers.) The best way by which we can keep on the side of the Home Rule cause the sympathy of all right-thinking men throughout the world is to make clear at all times the three following propositions: first, that Ireland's demand for national self-government is just; second, that the system of rule which the Irish people are seeking to have abolished is subversive to the fundamental principles of constitutional government and a denial of popular rights; and third, that in asking a favorable verdict of civilized public opinion for the Irish cause we are not seeking for any expression of hostility to the just privileges and rights of the English, Welsh or Scotch people. (Cheers.) Now the performance of this task here to-night will compel me to reproduce facts, arguments and figures with which students of the Irish question are well acquainted. But on a cause like ours which rests for moral sanction upon truth and justice the truth cannot be too often repeated when we are pleading that cause before the tribunal of Canadian public opinion. (Cheers.) What do we mean by Home Rule for Ireland? The right of our country to manage her own local affairs in her own way, so that the genius of her people and the resources of her land may be so developed as to make it the home of a peaceful, prosperous and progressive nation. (Cheers.)

Surely this is not an unreasonable or revolutionary demand; and I venture to say that no Canadian who enjoys the blessings of Home Rule will be found to refuse to Ireland that system of administration which is responsible for the progress and prosperity of this great Dominion. The right of national self-government is one universally recognised as the inalienable prerogative of separate nationalities. England has pre-eminently distinguished herself among nations as the advocate of this form of government, always excepting where her own selfish interests might be injured through its application. She has extended this form of administration to over twenty of her colonies, but she yet withholds from Ireland what she has thus given liberally to others of her dependencies, and what her statesmen and writers have advocated for Hungary and Poland and every other struggling nationality. Those same writers and statesmen until recently have successfully poisoned the ear of the civilized world against the victim of England's injustice. Until lately the world was led to believe by the organs of English public opinion that the majority of Irishmen acquiesced in the act of union of 86 years ago. It was also told over and over again that the Irish national sentiment was as unreasonable as the idea that the people of Ireland were able to govern themselves. It was also alleged through the press and the platform and the pulpit that Irishmen had the same political and social privileges as Englishmen, Scotchmen and Welshmen. Thank God! these calumnies no longer exist throughout the civilized world to the injury of the cause of Ireland. We have now succeeded in gaining the ear of civilized public sentiment, and in proportion as our cause is studied here in Canada or in America, or on the continent of Europe, does the volume of sympathy increase for the efforts of the Irish people to win back the right to manage their own affairs. We ask from the people of this Dominion a favorable verdict in our case, tried by any single test which defines the legitimate rights of separate nationalities, or by any form of evidence which can prove the complete failure and injustice of the system of rule which invaded that right in Ireland. We ask you to consider Ireland's claim from the point of view of its geographical position, its historical record of its complete or partial self-government, or its never-ceasing struggle to win back legislative rights; and where among the struggling nationalities of to-day can a stronger cause be found than that of Ireland. (Applause.) Nature in forming our country an island, endowed it with rights which men may steal but cannot destroy (applause); and even upon the statute book of England there is a law no older than the declaration

of American Independence which declares that no power on earth outside of the Irish people have any right to make laws for the Irish nation; and there is engraven a resolution upon the hearts and minds of the people of Ireland to-day that this law shall be re-enacted, or that no power on earth will be able to obtain one hour's peace for Castle rule in Ireland. (Loud applause.) But, unanswerable as is the case that can be made out for our country on the grounds of justice, we have even a stronger claim to the restoration of legislative privileges in the complete failure, the disastrous failure of that form of government which was substituted for an Irish parliament 86 years ago. This disastrous change in the political destinies of Ireland was brought about by what Mr. Gladstone has recently and truly described (and mind I am quoting the words of an English Prime Minister) as the "baseness and blackguardism of the Act of Union." (Applause.) Why, if I had referred to that legislative measure in these times a few years ago, I might possibly have run the risk of being sent back to undergo a few years more experience of her Majesty's hospitality. (Laughter and applause.) The authors of this measure held out the hope to the people of Ireland that a closer legislative connection with England would inevitably result to the material advantage of the poorer country. It was declared that there would be such an influx of English capital into Ireland that the natural resources of the country would be at once developed and Irish manufacturing industries more carefully fostered. Then, again, the authors of this measure claimed that law and order would be better maintained, class privileges subordinated to the general good of the community, and, above all, that the burden of taxation would be lighter upon the Irish people if the Irish Parliament were only removed to London. These were the promises held out to Ireland by Pitt and Castlereagh 86 years ago. What does the record during those years say as to their fulfilment? It proves the literal fulfilment of Lord Byron's prophecy that a closer connection of Ireland with England would result in a union like that of a shark and its prey. (Applause.) The manufacturing industries which flourished to an extraordinary extent under Grattan's Parliament were soon almost crushed out of existence as a result of Westminster legislation. A country capable—according to the authority of the best English economical writers—of supporting from twelve to fifteen millions of people, is to-day, as a direct result of Castle rule and landlordism, the impoverished home of less than five millions of people. Ten millions of acres of the richest soil in Europe lie uncultivated to-day in a land where periodical famines invite the charity and occasion the surprise of the civilized world. Trade and commerce, which flourished with the sympathetic rule of an Irish legislature, have all but disappeared since that parliament was abolished, while the taxation which was to have been lightened as a consequence of the abolition of the Irish Parliament—a taxation which amounted only to \$12,000,000 annually 86 years ago, is now as much as \$35,000,000 a year; and although the population of our country has decreased more than 3,500,000 during the present generation our taxation paid into the Imperial Exchequer is \$15,000,000 higher every year now than it was 40 years ago when Ireland had over 8,000,000 of people. In addition to this, we have no direct voice either in the levying of these taxes or their expenditure. When a drain of \$40,000,000 every year in absentee rents is added to this crushing Imperial taxation of \$35,000,000 annually, is it any wonder that Ireland is to-day the poor and discontented land she is before the civilized world? ("No, no.") These facts are not universally known, but if their real significance be considered by a practical people like the Canadians, I am sure they will find in them sufficient justification of the efforts of the Irish people to relieve ourselves socially and politically of the causes responsible for this poverty and taxation. (Applause.) But this does not exhaust the case which Ireland makes out against England in this connection. The social evils of landlordism have to be added to the political crimes of Dublin Castle. Previous to the abolition of the Irish Parliament Irish landlords resided in Ireland. They lived on their estates when not engaged in their parliamentary duties in Dublin. This residence upon their property begot a kindlier feeling between them and their tenants than unhappily now obtains. When, however, the Act of Union was consummated and the Irish Parliament removed to London, the Irish landlords, who were then Ireland's parliamentary representatives—thank Heaven they are so no longer (applause)—went to England's metropolis,

there to misrepresent the views of their country. In England's capital they mixed with England's rich and proud territorial aristocracy and soon contracted the excessive and extravagant style of living peculiar to their English brethren. They soon found their revenues derived from their Irish estates would not support them in these extravagances, and then was commenced that foul system of absenteeism and rack-renting, which are not only responsible for the poverty of Ireland during 86 years, but for the crimes and agrarian outrages which from time to time have occurred in that unhappy land. When the land of a country is monopolized by a small class, when that class is largely non-resident, and becomes in time hostile in feeling and sentiment to the people of the country, and when they resort to unscrupulous rack-renting and heartless evictions, is it any wonder that people treated as they have treated the farmers of Ireland, have occasionally been driven back upon the promptings of human feeling, and that those deeds to which I have referred, and which are as much deplored in Ireland as by you Canadians, have stained the record of our country during this period. I maintain that if the Irish leaders had no other object in view with the National League than to get at the roots of agrarian crime in Ireland, and pluck them out they would still merit the support of civilized public sentiment. (Loud applause.) These absentee landlords manifest no sympathy or kindness or good will for the people who supply them with their revenues. I say it is all but impossible for a people so treated to be kept under restraint. (Hear, hear.) Often during the last seven years since the initiation of the Land League movement we have been in danger of losing the sympathy of the Canadian and American people from the recurrence of those unhappy agrarian crimes in Ireland. It was asserted by our enemies that these evils were due to the teachings of the organized Land League, and not to the unjust evictions and inhuman conduct of the disinterested Irish landlords. Well, I think more correct opinions now prevail both here and elsewhere. As time rolls on it is becoming evident that these crimes were accidental and not incidental to the movement which had for its object the abolition of the land system, that this movement was entirely irresponsible for their occurrence. Just now the Irish leaders are doing their utmost to keep the people of Ireland within bounds. (Cheers.) Let me give you a single instance of this: Last June I was travelling along the west coast of Ireland, sent down there on a mission of charity. A large sum of money had been sent to me from America and Canada with which to relieve some poor fishermen on the western coast. One evening just as the sun was dipping on the waters of the Atlantic I reached one of the poorest villages along the west coast of Galway. That is the mainland village of Cararoe. I found that the evicting party had been there that day and had turned out of their poor cabins twenty families. I learned from the parish priest that the resident magistrate and officer of the community had admitted to him that they found food in only one of these twenty houses—(A voice, "Oh, horrible!")—and that bread was supplied by money which had been sent by me to that parish from the funds placed at my disposal by the charitable people in America. (Cheers.) I asked Father Conway and some of the men who had been turned out of their cabins why they so tamely submitted to that outrage under the circumstances. (Hear, hear.) One of them replied in words which I shall never forget: "Sir, we didn't want to do anything that would embarrass Mr. Parnell or Mr. Gladstone in their efforts to give a parliament to Ireland." (Loud and prolonged cheers.) These poor peasants knew right well, as the people of Ireland know to-day, that in a few short years that parliament will be got back for Ireland—(cheers)—and that in that parliament there will be a settlement, final and satisfactory, of the Irish question which will make it impossible for inhuman men called landlords, such as those who carried out these evictions, to thus trample upon human right and labor in the future. (Cheers.) Now as to this question of the rent and land movement at present in Ireland against eviction, some Canadians might find it difficult to understand why such a movement is necessary. Well, instead of giving you evidence from a Home Ruler, I will give you the testimony, not of a member of the National League or follower of Mr. Parnell, but the testimony of an English Tory, one of the most eminent writers on Political Economy at present in England, Sir James Caird. Writing to the *London Times*, of March last, he said of the evident condition of the poor tenant farmers of Ireland that if the present

prices of agricultural produce continue, the economic value of the lands held by 500,000 tenants will disappear.

Now, commenting on this extraordinary pronouncement from so high an authority, the *London Times*, which is not an organ of Irish national opinion, wrote as follows, and as the language is more remarkable than that which is quoted, I will not apologize for reading it to you. The *Times* of Saturday, 20th of March, 1886, said :

"It is not too much to say that the rental of 500,000 holdings (in Ireland) is practically irrecoverable by anybody, whether landlord, English government or Irish government. Holdings of an average rental of £6 offer no margin to meet such a fall of values as has already occurred, and as is very likely to be yet more severely felt. The market has fallen and is still falling. We have reason to believe that the full effect of the existing shrinkage of values has not yet been experienced, and we have no certainty whatever that values will not fall lower still. In that case all the weaker men among the comparatively strong will go down, and their rental will have to be written off as a bad debt."

I have been put in prison twice during the last seven years for using language much milder than that in reference to the land question in Ireland. (Hear, hear.) I think I was the first in the movement to declare that this economic rent had altogether disappeared from half a million holdings in Ireland, and I have lived after undergoing this imprisonment to find my very words repeated by Sir James Caird and the *London Times*. (Cheers.) Just before the close of the last session of the Imperial Parliament, Mr. Parnell introduced a bill which had for its object the staying of evictions on holdings like these to which the *London Times* has referred until a legal tribunal would ascertain whether the tenants of these holdings were able to pay their rents or not. That bill was defeated by the Tory Government—A voice—"Of course"—after recognizing how just Mr. Parnell's cause was, and how unanswerable were his figures, and these Tories are now using all their influence with the landlords of Ireland to do towards their tenants what Mr. Parnell wanted to compel them to do by law. (Cheers.) In fact the Tory government, or rather the Tory leaders, who, seven years ago, called Mr. Parnell a communist and confiscator for proposing to buy out the Irish landlords, are, to use a vulgar expression, "breaking their necks" in order to have the Irish landlords purchased out. And these gentlemen discover that the end of their infamous system is near, that the public sentiment of Great Britain is revolting against purchase schemes, and they now appeal to their tenants to buy them out. They are going with the process of eviction on one hand, and Lord Ashbourne's land purchase bill in the other, and declaring to the victims of their former tyranny that unless they consent to become proprietors and buy out the former owners of the land, then they will evict them for non-payment of rent. (Cheers.) Well, this, ladies and gentlemen, is proof of what Ireland has received from England in return for an Irish parliament, and to overthrow the causes of these crimes against justice and Ireland is the present resolve of the Irish people and the aim and object of the Irish National League. (Cheers.) Now, sir, the means to which we resort to efficiently carry out this great reform are as follows:—First, the organization of the Irish people in an open, constitutional movement: second, justifiable obstruction by our representatives in Westminster until Ireland is granted a restoration of the right to legislate for herself, such as she had eighty-six years ago, and as Canada and Australia have now within the limits of the British Empire (cheers); third, the education of the British masses on the justice of this demand of Ireland; and fourth, an appeal to the civilized world for a favorable verdict for our cause. (Loud cheers.) This is, of course, a peaceful policy and purely constitutional mode of action and management. Some honest Irish Nationalists throughout the world believe this too peaceful, and the conviction obtains in the minds of many men to-day, whose honesty of purpose I dare not for a moment question, that Mr. Parnell or the Irish people will have to resort to sterner logic than words and stronger arguments than meetings before conviction is brought to the English mind that it will be just and expedient for England to restore to Ireland the right to legislate for herself. (Loud cheers.) Well, I believe, as I have already said, that these views are honestly entertained, but I would venture to differ from the conclusions drawn from these views and opinions. (Hear, hear.) But I will avow that no

Irishman ought to be found in Ireland or anywhere else to say that Ireland would not be justified in doing what Canada once threatened to do, that is, in appealing to physical force if it believed physical force to be the surest mode of vindicating justice and winning back for Ireland a native parliament. (Loud cheers.) But the question of means to an end in a struggle like ours must always be one of expediency. (Hear, hear.) The remnant of our race in Ireland, less than 5,000,000, must be allowed to choose the best means within their reach with which to carry on the struggle handed down to them by previous generations. We have to recognize that the fighting element of our race has been all but driven out of Ireland. It is found in America, in Canada, in Australia and elsewhere, and, as some one said at one of my meetings, doubtless in reference to myself, there is scarcely any one left in Ireland now, except old men and women, children and cripples. (Laughter.) While that is not exactly true, still, even if it were, I think the people of Ireland thus described have given a very good account of themselves during the last six or seven years. (Applause.) But, instead of fighting our opponents with the weapons which would give them an enormous advantage over us, we have chosen to enter on the struggle for Home Rule by means of weapons which we know will give the victory to us. (Applause.) I claim that we stand to-day in the position of virtual victors in this struggle for Home Rule for Ireland. Ten brief years ago the Irish cause was involved in insular obscurity. To-day the whole civilized world is studying and discussing its merits. At that time most civilized peoples sympathized more with England for having on her hands a discontented Ireland than with the Irish people in their efforts to abolish Dublin Castle rule. To-day the position is reversed. Ireland has the sympathy and the good-will of mankind in her struggle for Home Rule. (Applause.)

Previous to the Land League the tenant farmers were a disorganized and dispirited class, while the landlords were a powerful and aggressive combination. To-day the tillers of the Irish soil are bound together with the rest of the Irish people in one of the most powerful combinations that has existed in Ireland for the last fifty years, while their previous lords and masters—the landlords—are looking anxiously across the English channel for some English party to bring in a bill, soon and sudden, to purchase them out of a position which is rapidly becoming an untenable one. A few brief years ago thirty millions of people in Great Britain were a unit in their opposition to self-government for Ireland. To-day more than half the population of England, Wales and Scotland, is on the side of Home Rule for Ireland, while the principles upon which Home Rule rests for a foundation are becoming the platform of a British democracy and the political creed of English statesmen. (Applause.) But another evidence, a more conclusive one still, of the truth of my assertions that we are winning “hands down” in this contest, is to be found in the attitude of one of the greatest of living British statesmen. A man who, but five short years ago, put Mr. Parnell and a thousand other Irishmen in prison without trial for struggling against Castle rule and landlordism in Ireland, now stands before the world as the foremost champion of Home Rule for Ireland and the most vehement denunciator of the infamous Act of Union. Ladies and gentlemen, is not this a record which speaks in trumpet-tones in favor of the policy which has done so much in so short a time to gain back for our birth-land the dignity and the privileges of a nation? With us in Ireland, engaged in this struggle, it is only a question of a very short time before it will be successfully terminated. I maintain that no English party can defeat our movement without resorting to measures which will ultimately curtail the privileges and liberties of Englishmen. We compelled Mr. Gladstone to suspend the right of trial by jury in Ireland, to put down the right of public meeting, to imprison public men without any trial and to interfere with the privileges of the press, and in a word to resort to the methods of despotism in order to convince him that force was no remedy for the government of Ireland. The tuition lasted for about five years (laughter), and then Mr. Gladstone was converted to Home Rule. (Loud applause.) If his successors in office resort to the disastrous policy—the great mistake of 1881 and 1882, I predict from this platform that before two years are over, you will learn of Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Salisbury becoming as enthusiastic Home Rulers as Mr. Gladstone is to-day. (Applause.) But, ladies and gentlemen, the success of the Home Rule cause is not dependent

upon the acts of individual statesmen or parties. The masses of England, Wales and Scotland are now studying the Irish question on its merits, and they are practically now, and soon will be absolutely the masters of the British Empire. While the agitation of the Irish question appeared to be carried forward upon lines which menaced or appeared to menace the rights of English workmen, it was hopeless to obtain from them an unprejudiced study of the Irish question, but as soon as they understood that the abolition of landlordism and Castle rule in Ireland would not only not interfere with the just privileges and rights of the people of Great Britain, but would powerfully aid the cause of reform and local self-government in England, Scotland and Wales, that remarkable change in opinion began which has recently resulted in a vote of the British democracy being cast for Home Rule and Mr. Gladstone. The aspect of the Irish question changed when the real objects of the Irish leaders began to be widely known and understood by the British democracy. The Land League discovered where certain systems and laws not only trample upon the rights of Irishmen, but upon those of Englishmen, Scotch and Welshmen also. To concentrate all our opposition against those systems was therefore the best and surest means of relieving Ireland from their oppression, and in breaking up that unity of opposition which had previously obtained in Great Britain against the idea of a separate parliament for Ireland. It could not weaken but would inevitably strengthen the cause of Ireland for her leaders and people to recognize that the social evils which impoverished Connemara, also were responsible for the poverty of the crofters of Scotland, (hear, hear), and that the land tyranny which outraged justice and natural right in Ireland had to be denounced by the Irish leaders in England, Wales and Scotland as well as in our own country. (Hear, hear.) In a word, our true policy was to convince the English, Welsh and Scotch workmen, and the British masses in fact, of two things; first that the past misgovernment of Ireland by the British and Irish aristocracies had not only done extraordinary injury to the Irish people, but that they benefited in no way the tillers of the soil or the wage-earning class in England, Wales or Scotland; second, that by asking for our rights in Ireland we were striking at the roots of a similar evil in England, Wales and Scotland as well. (Cheers.) This has been one of the secrets of our remarkable success for the last seven years. We have pursued a similar policy in the action of our representatives in Westminster during the same time. Mr. Parnell and his able parliamentary party have followed a double course of procedure in that assembly. Recognizing how obsolete the Imperial parliamentary system was becoming, how impossible it soon would be to prosecute all the business of a vast empire in one legislature, where Ireland was a great disturbing force through her just grievances, and the presence of a powerful parliamentary representation, Mr. Parnell so framed his tactics, and his line of action, as to bring home to the British mind the conviction that until the Irish question was solved, and a parliament given back to Ireland, it would be hopeless for the British people to expect the legislative machine to run smoothly at Westminster. (Cheers.) The success of this dual policy is now seen clearly not only in Scotland and Wales declaring that Ireland should have Home Rule, but in Scotchmen and Welshmen demanding a similar form of administration for their own country as we are demanding for Ireland. (Hear, hear.) Well, the English working classes, the mechanics, artisans and laborers who are anxious to ameliorate their own condition, men who want short hours of labor and a better system of education for their children, better dwellings and the extension of social and political privileges, these men now enfranchised and educated see clearly that there is no hope of obtaining these reforms until the Irish representation is relegated back to Dublin in an Irish parliament. (Cheers.) But we have tried in the policy and methods of the Land League to give the Irish question, or rather the issues involved in it, the principles for which we struggle even a wider application than Ireland and Great Britain. We are living in the days of the omnipotence of the press and the telegraph. Civilized mankind is rapidly becoming united in sympathetic solidarity. The oppressed of one land read of the struggles which a kindred injustice compels men in other lands to wage against class usurpation and monopoly. The one touch of nature which makes the whole world akin is given every morning when the electric spark conveys to men in every corner of the earth the doings of men or nations rightly struggling to be free—the one from social, the other from political in-

justice. The Irish question embraces the two greatest principles of human liberty: the right of men to have free access to the natural agents which the Creator has called into existence for man's use and sustenance, and the right of civilized communities to govern themselves in the way which seems best suited to the wants and wishes of their peoples. (Cheers.) These are what we are fighting for in this Home Rule struggle in Ireland. Our efforts to solve these principles, or these questions rather, on the lines of justice and reason must therefore win for us allies among the millions of wage-earners in Great Britain. They are calculated to earn for us sympathy for our cause as wide as suffering, and obtain for our country a good will as universal as the world-wide longing for a better and higher social existence. And this, ladies and gentlemen, is the cause which Ireland lays before the people of Canada and civilized public opinion throughout the world, and I know that we can wait with confidence for a favorable verdict. (Cheers.) Many people may still believe that Irishmen have not in their birth-land the inheritance of a nation. It is true we may have striven in Ireland, often in a very inadequate way, to win back Irish legislative independence. Many of our efforts for recovering this great right may have worn a Lilliputian character when compared to the resisting might of England, but we have struggled nevertheless doggedly, although poorly equipped, persistently no matter how often put down, until to day, with a population diminished and resources weakened but with courage increased and confidence unshaken in our country's cause and God's eternal justice—(loud cheers)—we have succeeded at last in wringing from Englishmen a recognition of Irish national self-government. (Cheers.)

With universal sympathy at our side; with a solid, united Irish people engaged in so just a cause; with an able and sagacious and unpurchaseable leader at our head—(applause)—with Scotland and Wales unequivocally with us; with a great and noble English statesman—(loud applause)—at the end of his remarkable career standing out boldly before the world with the declaration that the remainder of his life is to be devoted to settling the Anglo-Irish question on the lines of justice—(renewed applause)—we can not possibly fail in winning back a Parliament for Ireland unless the impatience of our own people thrust across Mr. Parnell's path a policy which would not win in a struggle like this with England, but would lose for us the allies we have won in Great Britain and the sympathy of the whole civilized world.

A BURST OF RINGING APPLAUSE,

renewed again and again, marked the close of Mr. Davitt's remarks, and as soon as quiet was restored, the chairman rose and introduced to the gathering Mr. Bigelow as a "barrister of large and increasing practice," the term used by Dr. Kane in introducing his friend Mr. Hill Smith. The audience appreciated and enjoyed the humor of the chairman, and accorded Mr. Bigelow a hearty welcome.

Mr. Bigelow said: Mr. Chairman—To all observers this struggle for Home Rule has presented a phase of public opinion that has never been witnessed before in the world. We find a people struggling for parliamentary government, and to what audiences do they appeal? Their representatives come across the Atlantic, not as travellers to recite their adventures and win applause, but to appear before our public, seeking to convince them that their cause is the cause of justice. They do not come alone. The advocates of the existing state of things have come here also. What does this mean? It means this—that the masses of the English speaking world must determine what shall be the state of Ireland. I rise to-night with great pleasure to propose a vote of thanks to Mr. Davitt for his lecture. I am not singular as a Protestant in this vast assemblage in the sympathies I have for the struggles of those who want freedom and liberty in their mother land. I would be untrue otherwise, Mr. Chairman, to the small drop—no, the half—of Irish blood in my veins. ("You're the stuff!") Yes! and plenty of it, said the speaker, clapping his hand on his breast. I wish, he continued, Mr. Chairman, you had selected some one more capable of voicing the sentiments of this vast audience towards Mr. Davitt than I am; but, ladies and gentlemen, you will permit me to put into concise language your thanks to him for his service, not only here but at home in the cause of liberty, and I am sure you will join me in expressing the hope, ladies and gentlemen, that he may live to see misgovernment blotted out from the last spot of the British Empire where it now

exists and Ireland enjoying the freedom enjoyed in all other parts thereof. (Applause.) There was once a time, Mr. Chairman, when the civilized world thought Mr. Davitt was crushed. The wheel of time moved on, and ruthlessly crushed him, as we thought, to the earth, but we have now the spectacle of Mr. Davitt rising and striving by all constitutional means to do what—to remain a loyal citizen of Great Britain, and enjoy in his own home that peace and safety, righteousness and justice which every British subject is entitled to. Will you permit me in a few words to offer him the thanks of this audience, not only for his services here but at home in the cause of Home Rule. (Cheers.)

Hon. John O'Donohoe, who was loudly called for, came forward and in support of the motion said: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen—We have all for a long time heard of the gentleman before us to-night. This meeting has evinced what has been thought of him. This sacrifice which he has made and his whole career is one that assured the cause in which he was interested to become the cause of popular esteem throughout the whole world. A country capable, as Ireland has shown herself to be at all times, of producing men of the stamp of Davitt, Parnell, and Sexton, to-day perhaps the most accomplished orator of the English House of Commons (cheers), a land that at all times produced men like these is a land capable of having the privilege of exercising the rights which are given to the most distant colonies of the Empire. (Cheers.) The emigrant that left Ireland, saw his cabin razed to the ground, and his children cast upon the roadside. He came himself to America, but still in the new land he would look back to his mother country. (Cheers.) Ladies and gentlemen, the fate of Ireland does not depend upon men living in Ireland to-day, but rather on men who are descended from Irish parents living in the United States and Canada. (A voice, "Blake.") They are, gentlemen, the sons and children of the exile, and these children instead of growing milder or losing the memory of the past of the Irish people, the memories of the past become intensified. The mother has taught her offspring to remember Ireland. (Loud cheers.) It is the offspring of those offspring that are to-day agitating for Ireland. There are men whom I see before me to-night, men taught by Irish parents to be true to the old land. (Cheers.) There is no danger for the Irish cause with people of such feeling. Sometimes you will hear it said "these poor, misguided Irish girls!" These poor Irish servant girls foolishly gave their money and their hard earned wages to send to their native land. These poor misguided servant girls! I say "glorious servant girls of America!" They are to be the mothers of the future Irishmen of America. (Cheers.) They are to uphold Home Rule. Home Rule is as well as accomplished as the worthy lecturer has said, and all the people need do is to trust in the deliberation and have confidence in their leaders. Question not their policy. Believe that they know best the course to take, and whatever course they adopt let us here and afterwards be at their backs. (Cheers.) The very countenance of the speaker to-night conveys the idea of truth. (Cheers.) He carries with him our expressions of belief and confidence. I heartily second the motion put by Mr. Bigelow. (Cheers.)

There were shouts of "Anglin, Anglin," at the close of Senator O'Donohoe's remarks, and at last Hon. T. W. Anglin was obliged to come forward and make a few remarks. He

CONGRATULATED THE IRISHMEN OF TORONTO

on the honor and respect they had shown Mr. Davitt by gathering in such numbers to hear him. They had known Mr. Davitt by reputation for many years, and had known that he had suffered in the cause of Ireland. They knew that he had proved himself an honest and honorable patriot not merely by words or professions, but by the endurance in his own person of sufferings and pains the worst that English law could inflict upon a felon. They knew that he had made the mistake that many a noble-hearted young Irishman had made, in believing that he and others could by the employment of physical force redress the wrongs of his native land, and restore to her the liberties and rights of which she had been so long deprived; and now they learned from his own lips—as indeed they knew before—that he had discovered his mistake. Mr. Davitt was to-day what the Irish people, with few exceptions, throughout the world were—devoted to constitutional means and methods of obtaining redress for Irish grievances.

At this point in Mr. Anglin's speech the electric light went out, and the great hall was for a few moments left in total darkness. Mr. Anglin continued his remarks, however, paying high tribute to the courage that had sustained Mr. Davitt in his sufferings for Ireland and to the ability and success that had marked this constitutional agitation for Ireland since those sufferings had ended.

A few gas jets were lit by this time, and the audience was able dimly to see the platform again. There were calls for Messrs. Lynch and Boyle, but the chairman came forward and apologized for them and put the vote of thanks to the meeting. It was carried by a rising vote amid intense enthusiasm, and the great audience before sitting down gave three hearty cheers for Davitt, Parnell and Gladstone.

Mr. Davitt briefly responded. He thanked the various speakers for the kindly remarks made regarding himself; said he had never before been so generously treated or so enthusiastically received, though his countrymen always behaved generously towards him; expressed the hope that it would not be the last time that he visited Toronto; but said he had resolved when next he came to the United States or Canada to speak of Ireland in public it would be during the recess of an Irish Parliament. (Loud applause.) He concluded by bespeaking for Mr. Justin McCarthy in his lecture at the Pavilion on Monday evening the same generosity and kindness that had been accorded himself. The great gathering then quietly dispersed.

LETTER FROM MR. DAVITT.

The following letter has been received from Mr. Davitt :—

"THE CATHOLIC PROGRESS."

SIR—Referring in my observations last evening to a quotation given in a recent issue of a Toronto weekly paper, I said that no such magazine as the *Catholic Progress* (the journal quoted from) was printed in Dublin. Thinking afterwards that I might possibly be mistaken, and that a magazine of that name may, unknown to me, be among the large number of periodicals appearing in Ireland, I cabled the following message to the *Freeman's Journal*, Dublin :—

"Wire me if there is in Dublin a magazine called *Catholic Progress*."

The following reply has reached me to-day :

"*Catholic Progress*. is printed and published by an English firm in London and circulated here."

I did not know that such a magazine existed at all, but, as it appears there is such a publication, I am glad to learn that a paper holding the same views as I have contributed to it with reference to Protestantism in Ireland is not that country but of England.

(Signed)

MICHAEL DAVITT.

Who have any desire to understand the Irish Question should take up one of the *Toronto Globe*, *Irish Canadian*, *Catholic Record*, *Kingston Record*, and read BRYAN LYNCH'S Pamphlet in reply to Rev. Dr. Kane and Mr. J. H. Smith, which contains seventy-two pages of facts. It is a perfect encyclopedia, and gives more historical information than any other work on the Irish Question.

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